

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC HEARING -PROPOSED FY2002 CITY BUDGET)**

April 16, 2001

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Sysyn, Clancy, Pinard, Lopez, Shea,
Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Cashin, and Thibault

Absent: Aldermen Levasseur, O'Neil, Hirschmann

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is a public hearing on the proposed municipal budget as required under the provisions of RSA 44-10 and in satisfaction of the requirements of Section 121(b) of the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972 as amended and in the City Charter, which calls for appropriations for municipal operating budget expenditures, School District operating budget expenditures and Manchester Transit Authority municipal fund subsidy to be financed through revenues of the General Fund; operating expenses of the Environmental Protection Division to be funded through Sewer User Rental Charges; operating expenses of the Manchester Airport Authority to be funded through Airport Revenue Funds; operating expenses of the Recreation Division to be funded through Recreation User Charges; operating budget expenditures of the Central Business Service District to be funded through the Central Business Service District Fund; Aggregation Fees for budget expenditures of the Aggregation program; and all Meals and Rooms Tax Revenues received in FY2001 to be held in a Civic Center Fund for payment of the City's Obligations under the Financing Agreement

The Clerk presented the proposed Appropriating Resolutions:

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of \$34,951,867 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for the Fiscal Year 2002.”

“A Resolution Appropriating to the Manchester Aggregation Program the sum of \$758,516 from Aggregation Fees for the Fiscal Year 2002.”

“Appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of Two Hundred and Five Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Two Dollars and Ninety Nine Cents (\$205,832.99) from Central Business Service District Funds for Fiscal Year 2002.”

“A Resolution appropriating the sum of \$3,751,196 from Recreation User Charges to the Recreation Division for Fiscal Year 2002.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$114,844,857 for the Fiscal Year 2002.”

“A Resolution appropriating the sum of \$12,791,347 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for Fiscal Year 2002.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of \$705,000 for the fiscal Year 2002.”

“Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in Fiscal Year 2001 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of the City’s Obligations in Said Fiscal Year Under the Financing Agreement.”

“Raising Monies and Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2002.”

Mayor Baines stated I would just like to give the members of the public a general overview of my budget as I am presenting it to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and the public. I want to remind people that this is the beginning of the budget process and now it comes under the purview of the entire Board of Mayor and Aldermen acting as a Finance Committee with the final budget to be adopted no later than the second Tuesday in June. So this is the beginning of the process and this is the outline and the scenario in which we developed this budget. Some of the challenges that we face in building a budget of this magnitude are outlined as salary and we will talk a little bit about that a little later on, responsibilities under existing contracts for both of these, salary and fringe benefits, operating expenses contractual and obviously some civic center issues that we are going to outline here as well and the economy, which is having an impact on our budget, especially as it relates to our ability to anticipate at least at this point in the process what is happening with revenues. As we know over the next couple of months and as we learned in previous years as revenues become clearer towards the end of the process that allows the Board of Mayor and Aldermen as a whole to make some adjustments to the budget as they see fit. The salary challenges are very clear. As you know, the City embarked on a process to look at the pay equity of City employees and adopted the Yarger Decker study. This will allow this year and also with contracted agreements 3% merit increases for employees and 96.35% of all employees receive that increase under existing agreements. The cost of living, again is a 3.3% increase. It is again mandated by contractual language in existing contracts. That goes to 100% of all employees, both those who have contracts and those who are non-affiliated employees. Also other incentives that go along with this that were adopted by the Board a few years ago are cash bonuses, longevity for when people reach a certain number of years of service they automatically get a certain increase. Also the issue of A-steps which are special increases for people who meet certain educational levels and other certification

requirements depending on the department in which they serve. The challenges are very clear with salaries. Based upon the current complement of FY2001 we looked at maintaining existing employees with a commitment to look at the existing number of full-time equivalent employees during the budget process and we may have some recommendations that may emanate as we go forward. The total salaries increased \$3 million or 6.4% so you begin to build a budget and you start with a 6.5% increase and when the vast majority of your budget is salaries that creates a very significant challenge. This chart will show you the challenges that we face as a Board and as a community. FY2001 salary expenses are \$46,901,171. FY2002 \$49,926,002. That is what you start with when you build a budget. The benefits were a particularly challenging part of our budget. Health benefits are projected to increase 18% this year so you begin to build your budget with the acknowledgment that benefits like Blue Cross/Blue Shield and policies that we have both on the City and School side, again negotiated as part of your contracts, results in an automatic 18% increase. The national average by the way is 21%. As you know, that is a crisis that all of us are facing, both those that are still working and those who are in retirement. The good news is that dental benefits are not increasing very much at all. That means that generally we have a very healthy workforce in terms of their oral health. That is good news for all of us. The budget is based again as I said on the present complement so we are not putting a lot forth in terms of some additions in terms of personnel to our budget on the City side. Again, the total cost of fringe benefits has increased \$1.3 million or 10.33%. This is what has been happening with these benefits on a yearly basis. We went from FY01 the cost of fringe benefits being \$12,816,898 to next year projected to be \$14,189,540. So, you can see what a challenge that represents in terms of putting together a fair budget for the City. The challenges on the operating side are...basically we have talked about level funding for all departments. Again, this is not a budget that funds all of the needs of the City both on the City side or the School side. I am not here to tell you that this takes care of all of the needs in the City. There are a lot of things that I wish I could have funded under my recommendations but I did not feel it was fiscally prudent to do so. Again, we will be looking at it as things evolve over the next couple of months and take a look at perhaps some adjustments that can be made. Total operating expenses increased by \$1.8 million or 9.7%. The challenges and we will explain why that percentage is in there having just made a statement and there is some explanation that will go along with that. Contractual, things that we have to do obviously the Highway Department and trash removal, Traffic (salary, benefits and operating for the garages), Public Building Services that is the contract with ServiceMaster for custodians and the like and Finance for the audit. That is the audit that takes place from the municipal side every year. What are the challenges of the operating budget? Here are some figures that are important for people to recognize some of the challenges that we are facing. Police for details and enforcement related to the civic center. Again, they will be covered by a revenue stream but these are things that we had to build into the budget and that is why you see an operational increase with certain percentages. Traffic, parking fees due the management under the agreement that

we have. That is the estimation of the parking fees that will be payable to the management of the civic center. Traffic contracted for lot attendants as well and Highway for trash and snow removal. Again, we had to look at budgeting for such things as additional trash containers within the downtown area because obviously there will be people walking to their parking spot of choice and we hope to have some trash containers for them so they don't litter our streets and our neighborhoods and that is going to be a major issue as we move forward – how friendly this situation is for the neighbors. First of all we have to make sure that we have good trash removal and good cleanliness for our City. Again, these will all be offset by additional parking revenue. Again, if you look at the operating expenses increase and what happens on a year-to-year basis, in FY01 \$18 million plus, FY02 \$20 million plus. The economy. What is happening with the economy? City revenues are expected to be flat. What we did this year with the recommendation of the City Finance Officer we looked at...we had a group of economists look at revenue trends and what we could expect in terms of additional revenues. Their projections were that we should build a budget based upon revenues remaining relatively flat. Now in another couple of months if we see something changing there we may be able to make some adjustments. The result of the revaluation is the great unknown. Again, the Board will be receiving a report on it. As you know we are all going to be getting the new value of our property in the beginning of the summer. How that will impact us is anybody's guess right now. All we can do is estimate but that is something we had to take a look at as we were building our budget. What would be the impact of that kind of a situation? The school funding issue has yet to be resolved. That issue has to be watched extremely closely because under any plan, Manchester is scheduled to receive over \$40 million from the state this year. Some of the plans that we have that are floating around in Concord right now could reduce revenues to the City of Manchester over a two-year period of \$10 million. That has to be watched very, very closely. That is based on information that has been provided to me. Revenue summary. Again if you look at what has happened on the City side with revenues, we are expecting a slight decrease and on the School side and a significant increase and that is largely due in part to the adequacy education grant of the City, which is going to increase approximately \$5.4 million from last year approximately. This is what has been happening with revenues by year. As you can see here, both the City and the Schools in FY01 and FY02 if you look at the City side expected to be just slightly under last year and if you look at the School side a significant increase. Now we look at expenses and what is happening with expenses under my proposed budget at this stage of the game or the process rather. We look at a variance on the School side of about 7.5% and the City is about 7.8% for service contracts and non-departmental, which will be explained more closely during the budget process. Expense summary by year. FY01 the School District received an appropriation of \$106 million plus and the City side \$78 million plus. Then service contracts for FY02 for the School District under my proposed budget receives about \$8 million above what they received last year. The City side again you can do the math but it is about \$6 million. That is my budget presentation and again I want to

emphasize that we are looking forward to hearing your comments as all of us look to build a budget that is both fair and maintains existing services and enables us to grow as a community. I know that a lot of people are concerned about the school funding issue. Again, one of the interesting aspects about being Mayor of the City is that you find out that budget increases get translated into cuts. What we talk about when you hear cuts is that budgets that were originally requested were cut back from their original request. In each case, the budgets are increasing. We feel they are increasing in a prudent manner. We have taken precautionary strategies in our budget looking at freezing operational expenses as best we can on the City side and looking for increases that are prudent on the School side and City side to deal with contractual obligations and the issue of benefits. Again, now is your chance to be heard and I can assure you that if the process works like it did last year, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen will take your comments under advisement. We will work together over the next several weeks to take into consideration your comments that you make tonight and again at the end deliver a budget that is fair to the community, fair to the people of the community and fair to the students of our community.

Mayor Baines advised that the meeting shall be open to public comment; that each person when recognized shall come to the nearest microphone, state their name and address in a clear and loud voice for the record; that each person shall be given one opportunity to speak and comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak; that once all present have been allowed to speak should there be a topic not discussed those wishing to speak a second time shall be provided the opportunity to do so.

Richard Girard, 166 Moore Street, Manchester stated:

Mayor Baines, Chairman Cashin and members of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. I would love to be able to comment on the substance of Mayor Baines's proposal to the Board and having served in this City's government for a number of years I certainly appreciate the difficulties that he has had in trying to assemble the budget and Mayor I mean that sincerely. I do sympathize because I know some of the numbers that you are dealing with and I know they are very difficult. That having been said, one of the items or the item that concerns me the most is the fact that there was no tax base projected and no tax rate projected as part of this budget and the reason for that, according to the Mayor, is that the revaluation makes it impossible to gauge the tax impact of this budget on the taxpayer. I respectfully disagree with that and would ask this Board as it goes through the process to use the numbers that come from the Assessor's Office in the normal fashion. In other words, I spoke with Assessor Tellier and asked him if the tax base were projected in the normal way that the tax base is projected for budgets what would the tax base be and he estimated for me that there would be about another \$25 million worth of value added to the current tax base. I took that number and I went to the City Finance Department and I took the Mayor's budget

and I asked them if we use this tax base, if we do all of the adjustments that we have to on the utility properties for the statewide property tax rate and get all of those numbers straightened out what are we looking at for a projected tax increase as a result of this budget and I was informed and I did have this on my community television program so it may not be new news to some of you but I was informed that in using the tax base that was projected by the Assessor's that the tax rate in this City would climb about 7.2%. That is \$2.20 per thousand. From \$30.68 to \$32.88. Now because of the revaluation you know as well as I do that property that grows faster than the base is going to carry more of the tax burden. Property that is slower than the base is going to carry less of the tax burden and property that goes about the same rate as the base is going to carry about the same tax burden but we know if the Mayor's budget passes as proposed today every taxpayer regardless of how they fair in the revaluation is going to have a tax rate or will be paying in taxes 7.2% more as a result of this budget. I would ask this Board as it starts this process to go to the City offices that normally project these numbers and to use the numbers that you have in hand now so that every taxpayer understands that there will be an increase in taxes as a result of this budget. Thank you.

Madeleine Staub, 374 Laurel Street, Manchester stated:

I am a sixth grader at Hillside. I would like to ask you to give the school library a budget every year. This is necessary because new reasons for reading come every year. These reasons are Britney Spears and Harry Potter. Kids will read about things they like. You don't see girls on MTV saying I will tie a yellow ribbon around my old oak tree for you Tony and that is probably why this book, Tony Orlando hasn't been checked out since 1986. A child shouldn't have to rejoice when they find information that they need for a report. This happens a lot at my school because there is a lot of books that we need that we don't have. I should have been able to find a book about Elizabeth Cady Stanton in my school library but I didn't. I would also like to ask you for new Social Studies textbooks. My textbook is older than me and as you know a lot has happened in 12 years but that is not covered in our lessons. We learn that Canada is north from us and Latin America is to the south. We need to learn about the hippies and the Viet Nam war. We need to know about what is happening in Kosovo. Another thing is that there is one woman that is talked about in my textbook other than a Prime Minister's wife. This one woman is a nun who worked in a mission. We want an up-to-date curriculum that teaches us more than just how to read a map. I am not showing you a bunch of statistics. I am telling you what we need to want to learn.

Kim Trabucco, 427 Manchester Street, Manchester stated:

I am a parent of three children that go to Wilson School and I don't know the last time you guys have been in Wilson School but they don't get to go outside. They have a playground that looks like a road. It has a dumpster on it. They are right next to the flies. Right before school gets out and right before summer vacation starts there are flies out there and trash on the ground because it doesn't always make it into the dumpster. I have

an 11-year-old daughter who is in a class with almost 30 students. She went from being an A-B student when we lived in Buffalo to a C student because the teacher does not have time to go over things with her and help each child individually. There are too many kids in this classroom. There are so many kids in the classroom that when they have a presentation for parents to show up they have to do it in two shifts. They can't fit everybody in there at the same time and for people like me who have a child in first grade, one in second and one in fifth, you don't want to spend your whole day there. You do part of it with the first child and then you have to go back and do it with the other two children. It shouldn't have to be like that. All of these kids should have teachers who can spend time with them one-on-one if need be. They should have a playground, some grass somewhere. I mean honestly when we moved here from Buffalo it was like the Bronx or something all over again. There is no grass back there. They don't need sand. They don't need gravel. They don't need roads running through their playground. They need a playground and somewhere to play. That is what playgrounds were when we were kids. I know when we were kids that 20 kids in a classroom was a lot and now 30 is a lot and next year what is it going to be that 40 is a lot. Nothing is done and the classrooms aren't getting any smaller. Since last year they have gotten bigger. Last year she did okay and brought home B's. This year she is dropping. She doesn't care anymore. She says Mom the teacher doesn't have time for me and when my 11-year-old notices that the teacher doesn't have time for her she is going to give up. She is not going to care. She thinks nobody else cares so why should she care and it shouldn't be like that. That is all I have to say.

Tracy Degges, 153 Cedar Street, Manchester stated:

I would like to think as a parent that my child can go to a safe and clean school but that dream is not to be. For way too long they have been put on the bottom of the list. Something always comes before their needs. I have always heard that children are our future. If this is the truth, don't our kids deserve the best the City can give? I can only hope that this Board will see the need for more money and that it goes to making our schools a better and safer place. We have all heard that this is a great City to live in so please stand behind our children and show them that you all care.

Kathryn Staub, 374 Laurel Street, Manchester stated:

I am the President of a new parent organization called the Manchester Coalition for Quality Education. Almost every parent that I have spoken to in the City of Manchester is dissatisfied with the current state of Manchester schools. We want our children to have access to art rooms. We want our children to have access to music rooms and computer labs. Heck, we want them to have actual classrooms inside actual buildings not in trailers and not in utility rooms but in classrooms in a building where the roof doesn't leak, where the windows are functional and where there is heat. That is what we want. We also want our children to have updated textbooks with all of the pages. We also want our principals to go through the entire school year without worrying if they are going to run

out of paper by the end of the school year. Every year the School Committee tells you how much money they believe it is going to cost to run the school system for one year and every year they get less than that and it is the children who suffer for that because there isn't enough paper and there isn't money for the things that they need. You know we want improvement and this organization is four months old. I did not testify at the CIP hearing because I really don't feel that I am up to speed on what CIP means, but I do understand the budget. They tell you how much they need to run the schools. Well heck let's give them the whole enchilada. Let's give them the whole \$119 million and see what they do with it because we don't want to just keep bumping along in the same mediocre pace. We want to move ahead. We want to see improvement in our schools. We want our kids to have something better than the kids have right now and that is what we are asking you for. I want you all to consider funding the school budget as presented by the Board of School Committee. Thank you very much.

Lorraine Farrell, 9 Arthur Avenue, Manchester stated:

I, too, like Kathy am asking you to spend every single penny you have on the schools and if the School Board has presented a budget to you that they think is fair and equitable and will fund our schools this year I ask you to support it. This has become an interesting process for me. I have never really been involved in politics before but I know that what my children are getting is not enough and I am committed to staying here for this very long ride that I believe it will become as we go forth. As PTO President, I spend my time fundraising. That is all I do. I fundraise and the money that we spend at our school goes towards filling in the needs of thousands of dollars for library needs, PE equipment, supplemental materials for English and Science and I could go on. I am very lucky that I have a really strong support group of parents who are willing to go the distance for their child but what about the other schools in the City that do not have strong PTO's or PTG's or PTA's that are fighting for every single nickel and dime for their schools and for their libraries. Is the education of their children any less important than the education of my children? We need to take a look at those issues. On the other side many parents that I speak with do not believe that you are providing the best possible education for our children. The enrollments in the local private schools are growing and now they have waiting lists because parents in this City do not believe that you are providing us with the education our children deserve. Manchester is losing some of its best and brightest students to private schools. We are fast moving towards becoming a City of education haves and have nots. I don't believe that you have a plan in place that will take care of our schools and in absence of the plan you should consider many of the recommendations of the Citizen's Task Force, including the termination of tuition agreements and having those tuition students take a look at those contracts with us and renegotiate or leave. The numbers in the NESDEC and Brinkerhoff studies support the need to make significant decisions to reduce overcrowding and to reduce the deteriorating conditions of our schools. As elected City officials it is your duty to respond to the needs of your constituents. You must address the crisis in our schools. You must take immediate

action that addresses the immediate and long-term improvements in our schools. We are all very well aware that this is an election year. We are watching and waiting to see which of you will make our City schools your priority and if you don't, like any other parent in this room that has a child that does not do what they are supposed to when they are asked to do something, I am going to give you a time out.

Paula Chessin, 330 Crestview Circle, Manchester stated:

I have a daughter at Hillside and I have a daughter at Central. I am here today as one of many, many parents in support of a budget as it was submitted by the School Board. I am asking you today to please honor their request. It is reasonable and at this point it is necessary. I have e-mailed. I have written letters. I have made phone calls. I have done everything I was supposed to do to the Mayor, to Aldermen, and to School Board representatives asking everyone the same thing – to give the kids in the Manchester public schools what they deserve, which is an excellent and a safe education. I am here today to ask you the same thing. Please give education the priority it deserves. I want to thank the Mayor for his efforts in making education a priority in the City. I would strongly urge the Aldermen to begin funding our schools at a level that right now is necessary in order to clean up the schools, deal with the issue of overcrowding, provide greater needed resources to the libraries, to purchase updated textbooks, to provide necessary structural maintenance...everybody has heard this list. It can go on and on. I just want to thank you for the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

Isidoro Flores, 247 North Street, Manchester stated:

I want to thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I just want to reiterate a lot of what the other people have said before me. I don't really think I can do much better than that and I just want to share this article with you that I am sure you have seen that Rona Zlockhower wrote this morning. I read that over at Cottons and found it very stimulating. It more or less said everything that I have felt and thought for a long time and I was very stimulated by this but I am kind of saddened that it takes this to get people motivated to support our schools and to do something about the situations there that we all know have existed for a very long time. These are not new issues. These things need to be addressed, we all know that. I am President of the Hillside Association of Music Supporters and we were involved in an activity not too long ago and we went to Bow High School to perform. It was the first time that I had been to the Bow High School and I took a tour of the facility and I was very, very impressed. It looked a lot like this and I am sure that you would all be impressed if you had seen it as well. After touring that facility, all of the rooms have computers and they are carpeted and there are a lot of nice new desks with plenty of room between the desks to move about and a lot of the rooms weren't utilized because there weren't enough students there. After leaving that facility I was convinced that I had to move to Bow but my wife and family convinced me that we have spent so many years here that this is our community now and this is our home and for better or for worse we have to make due what we can with it. I am asking you like all

of these other people have asked to support the school budget and give these kids the schools that they really need. I think that in order to get a good feel for it all you need to move some of these meetings to some of the schools. Hold your meetings in some of the auditoriums there in some of the facilities that they have to deal with and get a taste of what they have to go through and let the kids come here and have their classrooms in this nice place. If you need funding, you can do some of the things you did to get this building built. I bought a license plate and a lot of other people did too and I am sure people would buy bricks to build a new school or to do anything. If we had a hockey team playing at Central I am sure that would be renovated overnight. Maybe some head in hockey or maybe get the river a little closer to the school and we could build a walk around it. These issues all have to have a priority and I know you have a lot before you but you cannot ignore the schools any longer. They are really in a crisis state. Thank you.

Artemis Paras, 1275 Hanover Street, Manchester stated:

Good evening Mayor Baines and Board of Mayor and Aldermen. I appreciate the Mayor's slide presentation which I am sure were done by Wayne Robinson and some of your expert staff members. I understand not only your budget challenges, but I understand the restraints that are built in this budget. What is hard to understand is how we could put off for so many years maintenance costs for the City owned public buildings, specifically the schools. What I found interesting was we are still using Public Building Services in the itemized list but yet in some of the appropriations it mentions Building Maintenance. Because this is predominantly a French community among other ethnic groups, but it has been predominantly French, mantoneer, to hold in our hand, we have let one of our major investments just slide downhill. I urge the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to give serious consideration to our buildings and our houses where important things take place like learning, education and enlightenment, all of those positive words that affect life and how we understand life. It is an investment. It is not a waste of money. I know that this is the Mayor's budget. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen have not adopted this budget yet. If there is an inclination towards altering the Mayor's budget beyond the appropriation then I would only ask that this full Board make sure that we have a public hearing again to allow for all participants to voice their opinion. I want to make just one last observation or thought. When I attended one of the City's public meetings regarding the consolidated plan, I mentioned that with the CIP, the consolidated plan as you all know receives funding but many times that money if not always is restricted to certain neighborhoods. In other words, we can only use that money within a certain part of the City for specific neighborhoods. I said at this meeting that we have to have equitable funding. Why should a school within the zone that gets the money from the feds have perhaps privileges that another school that is outside of that boundary does not? I urge the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to give consideration to the fact that every school in the entire City should offer the same privileges, opportunities and facilities, etc. Thank you.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester stated:

I have a couple of different things here. You have a handout for the budget and over 300 pages of the budget here that I think all of you gentlemen have and nowhere in there can I find reference to the School District and how much the budget is. It shows up on one sheet here but nowhere else it is not broken down. As far as the School budget goes, they are requesting something like \$118 million and your budget contains \$114 million. I just want to remind you that there is about \$15 million of special education funding and about \$3 million of ESL funding that is government mandated that they must do so whatever amount of money you give them, they have to provide \$18 million worth of mandated services. If there are any cuts to be made, basically it is going to be made at the expense of the regular kids, building maintenance, teaching materials, and keep in mind that the School Department has a 25% to 30% drop out rate and that is something you seriously need to look at and maybe putting a few more dollars into it would help. In the Traffic budget in here somewhere after piling through all of this information and everything there was a reference made to 12 miles of road resurfacing and I forget where I saw it but I have to ask a question that was brought to me and that is this 12 miles of road resurfacing is done from the fees that we pay in our auto registration. The question that was brought up to me is what about the road resurfacing that was done in the regular Highway Department budget. Are we getting an extra 12 miles of road resurfacing for a total of 24 miles? That is just a question. The Police Department. If you turn to Section 17 in here you will find that one of their goals is site acquisition for a new police headquarters. You have heard me speak about that before. They are only crowded over there. They need a second, smaller station not a brand new one. MCTV. Your budget has about \$358,000 in it, but the cable franchise fee is bringing in about \$900,000 in revenue. What are you doing with the extra \$550,000? The civic center. Again, in this 300 page detailed budget there is nothing in there about the civic center whatsoever but in part of your presentation you outlined different expenses that had to be met with the civic center. \$360,000 in parking fees that we have to give them before we even make a nickel. This gentleman right here, Alderman Thibault, is the only one that is getting us any guaranteed money out of that building. Just things for you to look at when you go through the budget.

Alice Krasner, 77 Larchmont Road, Manchester stated:

You certainly don't have to hear from me what is needed. You heard it all. As a senior citizen I feel very strongly that I want to support the budget that the School Committee came in with because at the Voices and Choices meeting that I went to that you, Mayor, sponsored along with the Extension Service, was very valuable because I wasn't aware of all the problems and I am just heartsick about it. I support fully all of the things to bring back or maybe as other people said just to make a big improvement in the schools so we are all for supporting the budget for the School Department.

Susan Klein, 999 Chestnut Street, Manchester stated:

I would like to say that I am really aware that the Mayor has inherited the situation from the schools and I think there may be a situation where he is taking a lot of heat right now and getting a lot of angry complaints. I think, though, that to be getting complaints is a positive thing because I think that what it means is that parents and citizens in the community are learning a little bit more to speak out and maybe whom to speak to. I think over the years primarily parents have been complaining to the School Board about the schools and have been somewhat unaware of who holds the purse strings and that is essentially the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. I think that people because they are getting much more concerned about the schools and much more impatient about what has been happening in the schools are starting to speak up more. Our hopes are that they will be in touch with their Aldermen because as a member of the Manchester Coalition for quality education we think it is real important that people start speaking with their Aldermen. Not to get into any kind of argument of semantics with you about whether it is a cut to the proposed school budget or whether it is an increase but not quite as much as we had hoped for, I think the problem is that the School Board has asked you for money that it truly needs because the schools have been underfunded, neglected and behind for a number of years and it is cumulative. We are looking at situations where the resources for these kids are terrible and the point that you made, Mayor Baines, is that when you work on a budget you have to look at contractual obligations and mandated programs. The School system is in the same situation so when they pay out for all of the contracts and all of their mandates, there is very little left to get the things that we need for these children. There is very little left for resources and textbooks and additional teachers to address class size so whether it is an increase but not as much or a cut the full amount of money that the School Board has asked you all for is desperately needed and I am here to ask you to find a way to fund that. Thank you very much.

Drew Rothstein, 25 Bicentennial Drive, Manchester stated:

I have attended Webster Elementary School and I am an 8th grader at Hillside. This fall I will be going to Central. I very seldom use the bathrooms in our schools because of the filth, no soap, no paper towels and slow running water, if any. Also, my locker can only fit my backpack and books at max. I can't even bring a coat some days. When I go from class to class there seem to be hundreds of kids in the hall. You have to hug the dirty walls to get by. There are way too many kids. Last year I was in the portables for four classes, my four main subjects. Three-fourths of my day for the entire year were spent in the portables and the panels inside of them would fall off and lay on the ground. You were not allowed to use the bathrooms inside of them. You had to go to the main building. In the winter there was no shoveling and we had to wear boots and coats to school. For two weeks there was no heat in them. I hope that no one else will have to deal with this and I hope that my younger brother won't have to either.

John DeBoe, 1 Highland Court, Manchester stated:

I am a parent of two beautiful children, Melissa and Alison, and for them I am here tonight. Three years ago we were residents of Hooksett but we outgrew our house in Hooksett and we were looking for a new home everywhere but Manchester based on the reputation of Manchester schools, solely on the reputation of Manchester schools. Why is that? I don't know. I want it to change. What changed our mind and our decision was we met a girl who was a senior at Central High School who was also working in our daycare center and she said don't listen to what you hear or what you read, Central is a great school. We have great teachers and great students. Some things are wrong and some things need to be fixed but it is basically a great school. We talked about it and we thought about it and here we are living in Manchester. It amazes me that money might be put into a Riverwalk when you have teachers teaching in closets and you have children without books. This is unacceptable. Please give the School Board the \$119 million that they need and any extra that you might be able to scrape up and get them what they need. If they go over the budget that they have asked for then take them to task for sure, but give them what they asked for.

Peter Duffy, 246 Linden Street, Manchester stated:

The last three or four years and perhaps five...I am losing track, I have been President of the Central High School Parent Teacher Student Organization. Mr. Tanguay has been kind and thorough to go over this proposed budget from the School Board with us and there is no fat in that budget. The schools need every dime that they are requesting. We have met with them on at least two occasions and they need every penny they can get. I would ask the Board of Aldermen to please take more pride in our schools. Take ownership of our schools. Go and visit them. Pretend that you had to go to school there. Look at them please. I will ditto Mr. Flores' words. In looking at this room and comparing it to the facilities that our kids have to go to day in and day out it reminds me of a passage from Animal Farm where it says "all of us are equal, but some are more equal than others." Our children do not have these surroundings to go to school. You treat yourselves pretty well. Treat our children the same way. Problematically, if the Board of School Committee does not get their full funding we will lose some well needed programs. The middle school Spanish program will not go on line. We need that in this century. We need that right now. Also the School to Career Partnership Program is not going to be funded if you cut back. This program, and I am sure every PTO President in the audience can ditto this, has provided much needed enrichment programs in the science and the arts. At Central High School we received a grant from them that enabled 50 kids to rehearse for a three or four-month period and perform at the Palace Theatre. It is a fine, enriching program. Please give them every penny they are looking for. They really need it. There is no fat in that budget.

Amy Eckman, 1280 Union Street, Manchester stated:

I am President of Eckman Construction Company of Bedford and I was here originally to speak on behalf of MCTV, which I will do but also I would like to echo support for the

schools. I feel that as a community our most important resource is our children and their education and it is very important that we fully fund that. Now, on behalf of MCTV I want to let you know what we have been doing and the status of setting up a non-profit entity for this and for finding space. There has been a committee that has been meeting weekly since February and we have been having very productive meetings. It involves a cross-section of the community that has been involved in this. We have a member of the Police force, a member of the School Department, a representative from WGIR, a representative from the Hispanic community, a leadership trainer, someone from Grolen Communications, a representative of UNH Manchester, a real estate person and someone involved with Crotched Mountain Foster Grandparent Program. We have all been meeting regularly on MCTV and the non-profit entity. We have been very concerned to do this in the most cost-effective manner I want you to know. We have secured the services of Wiggin & Nourie to help us in incorporating this on a pro bono basis. We also have Lavallee Brensinger who agreed to provide preliminary architectural services on a pro bono basis in an effort to locate and provide preliminary designs for a new facility. We have also set-up a facilities committee, which as preliminarily looked at some very interesting options right in downtown Manchester. I want to emphasize to you that we have been looking at this with innovative ways to structure lease deals and to get this up and running in the most cost-effective manner possible. We have been talking about partnerships with many local non-profits and local educational institutions. It is very important, I think, for this entity to have a facility that is available during the daytime. We just want to assure you that we are very mindful of the needs both of MCTV and the community, as well as the need to provide these services at the lowest cost with the most value possible and we are committed to making this happen in that fashion and we ask that you include in the budget at least some money to allow for MCTV to move to a non-profit status and to secure space in downtown Manchester and I can assure you that we are working on this very diligently and attempting to do it in the most cost-effective manner. Thank you.

Bob Mongan, 415 North Bend Drive, Manchester stated:

I am here to speak on behalf of MCTV. It is basically the last local voice. If many of you are Manchester natives as I am, you remember the old downtown days when you shopped at Esler's, Moreau's, Pariseau's and on Thursday nights you exchanged ideas at the downtown Puritan. Those days are gone. The local radio stations now broadcast national feeds. They have five minutes on the hour for local news and it is headline reading. Channel 9 is a regional TV station, it is not a Manchester TV station. The *Union Leader* boasts that they are the largest statewide newspaper. There is no more local forum. Many people tonight I think right from the start alluded to being on MCTV or hearing it on MCTV. It is the local forum. Some of the important issues and most recently the civic center, which was a hotly debated issue and the Union Leader, took a stand and members of this Board took an opposite stand. On MCTV they were able to express opposing views. Now I think the public has a right to hear both sides of every

issue and MCTV fulfills that need. MCTV can expand to a third station. They also can expand to a downtown studio. The downtown studio will bring some foot traffic. There are some plans and the architects are working on it, to have a window studio copied after the Today Show. We are not going to have Katie Couric, but we will do our best. It will bring interest to downtown. By the third station we can have more shows, not only political but also sports shows. I thought it was sad this year that West High School and Central High School met in the State Soccer Semi-Finals for girls and there was no capability to broadcast that locally. With the new civic center coming on line, there will be capabilities to broadcast live. Central High School recently won two consecutive basketball championships and the best Manchester can do is put on a tape delay so that it shows on Tuesday night when everybody already knows who won. I think if the schools get wired a lot of things could be done live from the schools. Manchester is one of the few cities that does not have the schools wired for television. The Hispanic community, the Haitian community, this is their only way of communicating with each other. The newspapers do not follow what goes on in their community. The radio stations are no longer local. I am here tonight to ask to increase the funding for MCTV as the last local voice. It is a local forum and without it we just get national news and we lose our community atmosphere.

Jeff Klenotic, 111 Russell Street, Manchester stated:

I am a Professor of Communication Arts at UNH Manchester and I am also Chair of the department's Communication Arts. I have been a big fan of MCTV for some time. I think it is truly a popular medium, a popular channel. It is not popular in the way Temptation Island is popular, but it is popular in the sense that it is the channel that is reserved for the voices of people in the community and I think Bob sort of expresses very well how MCTV can reflect the diverse voices in the community. I also hear as I listen to people talk today about education...I think it is important to remember the role that MCTV can play in the educational mission that we all share for our children. With just a little bit more money and really we are talking about a small investment to allow for an expansion of MCTV but with a little bit more money the ability to increase the live broadcast from area high schools grows exponentially if you have a remote truck from which to do live broadcasts. There are many possibilities for partnerships with higher education. I know at UNH Manchester I would be delighted to see MCTV moved downtown in some capacity. There are many ways in which we could perhaps work out a mutually beneficial partnership with MCTV where internships for our students and other students at other colleges and universities in Manchester could be carried out at MCTV and perhaps we could use the studio for instructional purposes during day time hours when there is less of a demand on it. There are really some mutually beneficial partnerships that could be hammered out, particularly if the studio moves downtown I believe. There would be increased distance learning opportunities through an expanded MCTV. There would be more programs directed towards parents and children, which is vital and important to help offset some of the trends in commercial programming where

parents don't always feel very comfortable allowing their children to watch that programming. I just hope that as you go forward with your process and I know it is a difficult one that you will remember Manchester Community Television and that if you help MCTV expand with a marginal investment you will see a huge pay off in the next 10 years I am sure. Thank you very much for your time.

Lionel Leblanc, 203 Belmont Street, Manchester stated:

Thanks for giving me the privilege of addressing you and your Honor I regret that I didn't bring your famous dancer here tonight. I just had my house assessed and know what my taxes will be. I keep hearing how deplorable the schools are and the teachers are being greedy and living much better than we are always requesting through their unions an increase in wages. Why can't that money go to repair the schools infrastructure? They had enough. All the unions in Manchester have us hostages to their whims. We taxpayers are subsidizing them. They treat us taxpayers very unfairly. Anytime a new investment is made, they always turn to the taxpayers to bail them out. They treat us like we have a bottomless pit. No new taxes this year. I have been paying taxes for over half a century and I paid enough to sustain a City. I read in the paper about the increase in Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Right now we are paying 90% of their premiums. All City employees should pay the 18% extra; they can afford it because they just had a raise. I don't see why the Superintendent of Schools has to have two assistant superintendents. Those administrative positions cost us \$250,000 a year. That is pork we can't afford. Us seniors are being shafted. We need a senior center and make it the first priority before we demise. We have waited long enough. As Smith-Barney says, the CEO and Chief Executive Officer of the Stock Company, we have earned it. All City workers should be glad they have a job. It is something really that they don't have to worry about so please do not forget us. Don't raise those taxes. Don't be like Concord with 12%. 11% in two years is too much. Thank you.

Richard French, 80 Milford Street, Manchester stated:

I serve as Chair of the Crotched Mountain Foster Grandparent Program. I am here tonight to speak in support of Manchester Community Television, an electronic outlet of community service and support that links our City. MCTV allows our community at large to see the good things that create a good City. The young people in our educational system are supported and celebrated by their coverage on MCTV from concerts to sporting events, graduations, pageants and school assemblies. MCTV links the learning process and the activities of our schools back to the home. MCTV is also an outlet for the many community support agencies and non-profit organizations that do good work every day, much of which is without notice or applause. MCTV brings awareness and action to the groups that need an opening for communication to the people of our City. Stronger partnerships with non-profit organizations and an active neighborhood program make for a stronger community. I am especially proud of our work with the Foster Grandparent Program and our ability to present our story and our needs to the people via

MCTV. Seniors and shut-ins need a link to their community and MCTV is part of that link. Unfortunately, the ability to create programming at MCTV is hindered because the facilities are not available during normal daytime hours, only in the late afternoon and evenings, a time which is not favorable to most of the senior population. A new facility would open up the availability to more seniors and students alike. Also, a new facility with an active media center would educate many of us in the field of computers and the Internet. Manchester Community Television is the broadest, farthest reaching education window in our City, a place for parents, students, veterans, teachers, public students and young and old alike. This is truly a great opportunity to do something substantial here. If not now, when? Thank you.

Lucille Stevens, 100 Woodcrest Court, Manchester stated:

I am here as Chairman of the Concerned Taxpayers of Manchester. I am here tonight to express my concern about the overall increase in the City of Manchester's municipal budget. Many of our members are senior citizens on fixed incomes. They are very concerned about the consequences of the recent revaluation of their property. They constantly express fear that when the new tax bills come out shortly they will lose the homes that they have lived in and paid taxed on for many years. The City is taking on too many projects at the same time without any concern for those who have to pick up the tab. Civic center, Singer Park, Riverwalk and the Hackett Hill project to name a few. The most important project that should be confronted is bringing schools in this City up to the standards that they should have been and not neglected over the years. I respectfully request this Aldermanic Board to look very closely at the budget and cut any necessary expenses. Thank you.

George Bruno, 161 N. Adams Street, Manchester stated:

I want to add my voice to the chorus requesting full funding for Manchester schools and I am reminded of the story about the 1960 campaign between Kennedy and Nixon if some of you go back that far and it was a hard fought campaign that Presidential year, not unlike the campaign that we recently experienced in the United States and acquisitions flew back and forth between the two candidates and ultimately as you know one candidate won by a very small margin. When John Kennedy was in the White House a reporter asked him, Mr. President did anything surprise you upon becoming President and his response was yes the think that amazed me most is that all of the charges that I leveled against my opponent were true. I think that is similar to the conditions that we have heard about in our schools. They are in absolutely deplorable condition and it is true. I was amazed. I walked through Central High School for the first time a couple of weeks ago. I had never done it before and I couldn't believe my eyes the things that I saw. The leaky ceilings, the paint peeling off the walls, the graffiti, the clogged up bathrooms, the smashed in doors, the cracked windows, and the filth everywhere. Ladies and gentlemen of the Board, I have traveled throughout the third world and I have to tell you that the conditions at Manchester Central High School compare to the third world. In

fact, I have seen schools in the third world that are better than Manchester Central High School and I think we deserve better than the kind of conditions that are present at Central High and some of the other schools. I don't think our children deserve a second class education so I hope you will do what you can to make certain that our school budget is fully funded and that the conditions that exist in our schools are taken care of as quickly as possible.

Joan Fitzgerald, 69 Lancelot Avenue, Manchester stated:

I, too, am here to speak in terms of requesting that you go to the full funding that the School Board asked you for. I have three children. Two at Hillside Middle School and one a senior at Central High School. I have personally experienced issues of losing quality teachers and what that impact had on my daughter who is now a senior and that was done by facility damage and the disgusting facility situation that we have at Central High School. I am also a 1973 graduate of Central High School. I am a 1977 graduate of NH Technical Institute. I am a registered dental hygienist. I am past President of the NH Dental Hygienist's Association and I currently serve as Legislative Chair for the NH Dental Hygienist's Association so I am fully informed and trained on a national level with the American Dental Hygienist's Association and I do understand the impact of grass roots efforts. I know the kind of impact that grass roots efforts can have and I ask you to please stop the process that if you get more money from the federal and state situation that somehow that gives you carte blanche to lower the City of Manchester's liability toward the schools. Every time you do that, we lose a little bit more in our facilities. We need a strong vision. We need a strong educational mission and I don't see it happening. I simply don't see it happening in the public schools. I urge all of you to take your lunch hour and go over to Hillside Middle School and sit on their stools. We have had to do that because as a parent they have programs and we sit there. The seats are literally at a 45-degree angle. You sit down at that seat and try to eat your lunch. That is a table with chairs that has been there and not been replaced. We just remodeled our home, which was 40 years old and you all know...every remodeling magazine I read said you must remodel at 25 to 30 years. Things fall apart, they just fall apart and then you overcrowd the situation and then you have multiple problems. I urge you to give the School Board the full amount of money and we have to figure out how...I know how to do that and I do sympathize with the elders of our community on a fixed income. We base our revenue on property taxes and that does affect someone on a fixed income. I also had the opportunity of living in Atlanta, Georgia and New York State who operate on that.

Aubrie Farrell, 9 Arthur Avenue, Manchester stated:

I am a sophomore at Central High School. I remember growing up playing dominoes. You know you stack them and you make cool little curves and they all fall in order. That is what it is like on our staircases between classes when the bell rings. If you hit with your knees the person in front of you, it will create a domino effect causing everyone on

the staircase to fall. That is why you need to fix the overcrowding problem. I have heard some ideas of putting cubbies as Hillside has in the courtyard or any open space available. That will eliminate crowding in the hallways to a certain degree, but when it is time to change classes or switch buildings, it will not help at all. I really can't say that...you know we need the money but I am going to give you a little insight into why we need it. I am late to class because I have to fight with my locker to get it open. I watch peers have to hold the lockers up so they can get it open because they will tip over. I see people who open their lockers and it is an avalanche of books, coats and bags because there aren't enough lockers for people to put their things in. I see people testing the seats before they sit down to make sure they won't tip over if they lean back because they are not in proper condition for us to be in. I just ask you to give us what we need and we need the full amount that the School Board is proposing.

Amanda Laprise, 299 Greeley Street, Manchester stated:

You have been hearing a lot of adults talk about what they think about the budget and education and I just wanted to let you know as a student what we think should be done with the money. I think the money should go to schools and improving them because at my school we only have one package of graph paper left and that may not seem like a big deal but when we run out we have to make our own lines and we don't really learn a lot doing that. We could use the time making lines to learn more. Also, I have heard with the budget cut that we will be losing some teachers. We can benefit from a lot of the teachers and if you lose the teachers our schools are going to become way overcrowded and I just ask you to give us the money that the schools need so we can have a good education.

CJ Perez, 273 Spruce Street, Manchester stated:

Thank you for allowing me to speak. I don't have any children in the school system. I am considered Uncle CJ. I am President of a non-profit organization called United Families. I am known as Uncle CJ in the community that I live in at 273 Spruce Street. There are approximately 20 families that we have as members of United Families. What I have done to basically begin to motivate the children to continue to make strides in the current situation is that I give out of my own pocket. \$5 for an A, \$3 for a B and nothing for a C. Anybody can be average. Our schools are below average. Our schools are way below average and I motivate these children out of my own pocket so they see that Uncle CJ cares enough. I have been to parent-teacher conference meetings where I have actually gone and spoken to the teachers and they say well you know we would really like to have more people like you in the community because it is very difficult for us to motivate the children and it is hard with the schedules that we have and the overcrowding that we have. Unfortunately I didn't get to go to school in Manchester. I am from California. There is no comparison and unfortunately we have what we have to work with. You have a budget that has been requested. You have people like me and all of these other parents who are begging for it. We are not just asking for it anymore, we are

begging for it. I have heard about this problem for the past four years and this is actually the first time I have taken the opportunity and the chance to do something like this. It is very, very important to me because these kids look up to me and say Uncle CJ I can't get an A in first period because it is just too cold; I can't pay attention. That is something that motivates me to help them as best as I possibly can. I am hoping that...I am here as a concerned party of the community and hope that maybe these times, these periods where maybe you don't have any children who go to these schools you can take this interest and you can find this important. Thank you for your time.

Harriet Bengal, 154 Head Street, Manchester stated:

I think you should fully fund the school budget. I think the money that is raised by the state property tax should go completely and fully to the schools for their buildings and their books. I want my children to have a good education. I want them to get a good job. I want them to come back to Manchester and increase the tax base so that you have money to tax businesses because when I grow old they are going to put me in a nursing home and I want it to be a first class nursing home because of good jobs they will earn good money and they can do that. I also think that MCTV generates an awful lot of income and all of that income they generate in my PEG access fee for cable belongs to MCTV. That is another excellent educational activity here in the City of Manchester that is going to produce a lot of business. Now, where are we going to get this money? Hey, you have heard it from me before. What is wrong with recycling? If every citizen in the City of Manchester recycled as much as they possibly could, we could save \$1.5 million on our solid waste budget. We pay one price for recycling, not a per ton fee. The City of Manchester, you do about 20-25% max. You can do 67% to 75% recycling. The other thing is do you have a grant writer working for the City and School Department? I have had to go for grants before and let me tell you those books come five to six inches thick. You get a grant writer, a good one, who can earn three to four times, bring in three to four times the money to the City and to the School than what they are getting paid then they are worth the budget. Thanks.

Ted Obie, 712 Hevey Street, Manchester stated:

I wasn't planning on speaking tonight but after hearing all of the passionate pleas to fill the school budget I would like to second that. There are three things on my list. First of all I don't envy your jobs. I have been in the budget process in companies and it is a tough one. I understand that something has to lose, but I would ask you to think seriously about the student-teacher ratio number one. I have taught in one way or another for the past four and a half years youth and adults and regardless of the situation I have been in and regardless of what educator I have spoken with the number one issue that comes up is the student-teacher ratio. At best, it is adequate right now and if anything has to go, this should be the last thing to go. There is nothing more important in the education process than attention to the children, whether it be materials, whether it be the building...those are all extremely important but nothing comes before the student-teacher ratio. Second of

all, I sit on the Board of Directors for the Western Regional Business and Education Partnership and I was asked to sit on that board because I have an information technology background. I have taught software to adults. It is a great board and it is an active board, but one of the concerns that I had in speaking with various members of our community on the school board or in the Manchester school district offices is the lack of funding for technology in our school system. I would really like to see some attention paid to that and what I am talking about is not only the computer systems and the networks, but also teacher training. Send them to software classes. I was at West High as Mayor Baines knows and was frankly appalled at what they had for computer equipment and how they used it. They had some computers, but they weren't being used to anywhere near capacity and there were a couple of reasons for that. They didn't have enough computers and the teachers frankly didn't know what to do with them in the classroom. There weren't enough to use them properly and if there were the teachers wouldn't have known how to use them properly and integrate them into the curriculum. I think some attention needs to be paid there. We are not preparing or children for today. We need to be preparing them for tomorrow and tomorrow is technology driven. We are not getting away from that. Lastly, teacher recruitment. Again my experience with West High left me with some sadness for lack of a better word. The building wasn't funded properly. It was clear that the supplies weren't there. This affects teacher recruitment and I speak from this personally. It doesn't encourage someone like myself to take a salary at that pay and give up their higher paying jobs to go into education and work in an environment like that. Whether I am thinking properly or not, the fact is that it has a negative impact when you are deciding whether or not to go into that field coming out of that situation. Please take care of the schools.

Andrea Flores, 247 North Street, Manchester stated:

I go to Hillside Middle School and I am a 7th grader there. I would like to talk to you about the cleanliness of our schools first of all. The hallways are very hard to walk in. Every day you see papers scattered across the floors. The lockers are too small to fit our books in. The bathrooms are completely filthy. Every month they pretty much repaint the stalls because of graffiti and even then it doesn't take care of it. Recently I had a class in one of the trailers and we had a propane leak. We were forced to go from classroom to classroom in order to have our study and our normal class. Also, the buses for our schools are a problem. The bus drivers, some of them are very...don't drive as well as they probably should. Sometimes I am afraid to go on the bus because I don't know what is going to happen. Also, I would like to talk to you about the condition of our books. I have a science book that if it drops on the floor then all of the text will shift but the book will stay put and the text is slowly falling out of the book. A budget cut would effect us because we need as much money as we can get in our school because basically we are your future; we are what is tomorrow. Basically what has come to me is that we are less important than the civic center and your future are the children in this

room right now and the children are these schools and they are going to be sitting in your seats. I just want you to think about that. Thank you.

Casey Farrell, 9 Arthur Avenue, Manchester stated:

I am an 8th grader at Hillside Middle School. Most of my books have pages ripped to or they are ripped halfway through the middle so we can't read them and in our science class we are not able to take home any books because there aren't enough or they are in bad condition. Many of the tables in the cafeteria are either missing a seat or tilted so we have to sit on our binders so we can sit straight. Going through the halls during lunch is horrible because you cannot get through and you have to squeeze through. Sometimes you knock someone's books over and you have to stop to help and then you are late for class. Also, we are not able to take home any books for English because there are not enough and because of that we are not able to learn what we need. We have to share books and our seats are falling apart too. Thank you.

Rona Zlockhower, Manchester stated:

I want to join with my fellow citizens who have spoken tonight in asking for adequate and full funding for the school budget. In particular I want to thank the Mayor. I believe that he has brought the needs for our facilities and for our schools to the forefront of public attention and hopefully to the forefront of attention for political action on the part of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen and the School Committee as well. I hope you will join in that crusade that he has called for and be part of the team and part of the crusade. I just wanted to say that our concern should not be just on how many dollars we are spending but also on how well it is being managed. We need some more detailed plans and we need some more accountability on how our money is being spent for school programs. For example, are we funding adequately technological support for our students so that they can meet the technical and computer requirements of this age and the competitive workforce they will enter into? Are we reducing the drop out rate and catching those who for one reason or another are falling off the edges of our system? Are we challenging the gifted and talented? Are we making sure not only that we take care of our special needs students but that our staff and faculty are trained to take care of them? I hear that this is a big problem. Are we providing language training so that our kids can meet the bilingual employment needs? I don't know if you look in the employment ads, but many more employers are requiring bilingual employees and our kids are also going to be working in a global marketplace where they will need many, many languages. Are we enhancing the science and math offerings so our kids can work in the competitive fields of engineering, medicine, computer science and research and finally are we assuring that there are detailed plans for curriculum instruction and that our facilities are designed to support the curriculum, instruction and programs that we need and not just holding up our roots? Thank you.

David Chapman, 232 Day Street, Manchester stated:

I have a son who is a sophomore at Central and I am extremely impressed by some of the students who came here to speak. I didn't come here prepared to speak but as I sat back there and listened to the comments it occurred to me that there is something fundamentally wrong with children having to come to adults to beg not for excellent schools, not for the best schools in the state but just for adequate school. Why aren't we absolutely ashamed of ourselves that the children have to come here and beg for the schools? I don't think that there is enough money in any of the budgets that have been proposed to do what has to be done and I understand that there are a lot of constraints that you have in running a City like Manchester, but I am absolutely appalled that children have to come here and beg the governing officials of this City for what they should be getting without asking. Thank you.

Kevin Farrell, 9 Arthur Avenue, Manchester stated:

I am a fifth grader at Webster School. I would like school funding because when I was in the third grade I was afraid to go to the bathroom. The stalls were hanging off the hinges and it was very unsanitary. You had to step on a pedal to get the water to come out and in the winter it was cold and in the summer it was hot. Where I am now, we have new bathrooms on the top level but down in the lower level near the gymnasium the bathrooms are still unsanitary. I know that from a first grader who rarely goes to the bathroom because he is afraid of these conditions.

Marie Jackson, 199 Westwood Drive, Manchester stated:

I came here unprepared to speak but listening to what has been happening here this evening...also I am a member of the Concerned Taxpayers so I second what Ms. Stevens and Mr. Leblanc had to say. The problem I have here this evening is that a lot of these parents and people who belong to the organizations for schools...we have a School Board. Now I am a great fan of MCTV. I used to watch the movies every night but now I watch that because I love watching you on TV and I also love to watch the School Board. I watched the School Board meeting the other night and I think they only had for speakers. I feel that a lot of you parents, it is great that you came here to speak but you should be speaking to the School Board. They are the ones who are spending the money. They are not accounting for all of the money that you give them and I think that is where you parents are missing the boat. You should be there. I have called School Board members. I don't know how many of you have. I have called Aldermen. I am sure you recognize my New York accent but I feel that the problem is that there is money being given and it is not being accounted for. That is all I have to say.

On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to refer the Appropriating Resolutions to the Committee on Finance for further consideration, with reports to be made to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen at a later date.

There being no further business to come before the special meeting, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk